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Author(s): Gilbert Reid

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## JAPANESE DIPLOMATIC TACTICS

### A RÉSUMÉ OF EVENTS

*By Gilbert Reid, DD., Director-in-Chief of the International  
Institute of China, Shanghai*

While all the Western world is absorbed in the ultimate outcome of the war in Europe, their various interests in China, as well as the sovereign rights of the Chinese, are in great danger of being overlooked. It is well, therefore, for Europe and America to keep one eye open to the Far East.

Few statesmen can match the Japanese in diplomacy. Their official despatches are written in faultless English or French. They are courteous, though determined. They look far ahead, but never disclose their purpose or their object, till the psychological moment arrives. They practice infinite patience, and believe in their star of destiny. As they learned the modern military art from Germany, their diplomacy from China, and their public school system from the United States, so they turn these three forces against these three countries, but with so careful and discreet a method as to elude critics.

The Japanese diplomat always "puts the best foot forward," though no one quite knows whether or not it is the *right* foot.

The Japanese diplomat plays *one* card at a time, and each time the best card for that time. The significance of the play is known when the game is finished. It is not true that he keeps any cards "up his sleeve;" he merely does not show his hand.

The diplomacy of Japan, to use another figure of speech, has major strategy and minor strategy, and also grand tactics and minor tactics. The major strategy is not divulged to strangers, until the proper moment. A study of tactics may help one in conjecturing the strategy. Only a few men, in war or peace, are responsible for either strategy or

tactics. The diplomatic tactics practiced in China the last few months are now open to the gaze of the world. They are the tactics of the party in power—of the diplomatic “General Staff”—and are not the concern of Japan as a nation. History has been made so fast that we lose sight of the order of events. Outsiders are surprised at the way some new event arises, but to the Japanese diplomat, who has an ultimate object, a grand strategy, there is no surprise. A résumé of events, relying on sound, historical data, may be useful. The strategy is partly in the future, and partly already disclosed, namely, the domination of China, and, if possible, Eastern Asia. If there is any irony, it is the irony of facts, coupled with all the niceties of phraseology.

1. The first card played—the first step taken—the first tactical move, dates August 4, 1914:

The Japanese Government hopes that peace will quickly be restored, that the war will not extend, and that Japan will be able to maintain an attitude of strict neutrality.

This card played was one of lesser value, and greatly pleased the other side, who at once ceased to be alert. Nothing more satisfying, more proper and considerate, could Japan have done at that anxious moment. With such a declaration, how could China be suspicious?

2. The next card, which followed quickly, but also was in no wise startling, is found in a subsequent sentence of the same official despatch:

In the event of Great Britain becoming involved, the terms of the Alliance between Japan and Great Britain will be affected, and Japan will take the necessary measures to discharge her obligations under the treaty.

This card must have been a “trump.” Even should Great Britain be slow in observing the treaty, Japan was determined to be true to her ally and faithful to treaty obligations. All criticism is thus silenced.

3. The next tactical move is made known in the Ultimatum of August 16. Japan’s zeal to abide by the Alliance is quickly put to the test.

The Imperial Japanese Government, in accordance with terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance to ensure the permanent peace of the Far East, advises the German Government to carry out the two following items:

1. Either to withdraw or to dismantle German warships in the seas of Japan and China.

2. Germany shall hand over the whole of the leased territory of Kiaochou Bay to the Japanese authorities, without condition or compensation, before 15th September, 1914, with a view to eventual restoration of such leased territory to China.

This card must have been the ace of spades. I am convinced of its grand tactics. It is so grand that the strategy is lost sight of, and only the tactics are seen. China cannot complain, for the permanent peace of the Far East is to be assured—even if Japan has to fight for it. Germany should take no exception; there is no semblance of threat, not even the use of the word “ultimatum,” but only *advice*, and that on two points only. Great Britain should feel pleased with the considerateness of her ally who advises that only German warships be withdrawn or dismantled. Germany should again be pleased and grateful, for Japan kindly offers to act as go-between, with Germany on the one side and China on the other—two apparently estranged peoples. China, too, should be pleased, because Kiaochou Bay will eventually be restored to her through the graciousness of Japanese mediation, that is, of course, *if Germany accepts the advice within seven days time*. China’s prospects depend on the card that Germany will play. In any case, whether the advice on these two insignificant matters is accepted or not, Japan’s “ulterior purpose” will be known in the future and only in the future. All friends of China, and even the Chinese themselves, detected no danger threatened to China. Only Germany was endangered.

4. Almost simultaneous with the above action of the Japanese Government, the British Legation in Peking, on August 18, issued through Reuter this message of consolation:

It is understood that the action of Japan will not extend to the Pacific Ocean beyond the China Seas, except in so far as may be necessary to protect Japanese shipping lines in the Pacific, nor beyond Asiatic waters westward of the China Seas, or to any foreign territory except territory under German occupation in Eastern Asia.

The British Government thus thought it prudent to issue a statement of its own, lest the diplomacy of Japan be misunderstood by thoughtless observers. It is a case of British diplomacy deeming itself superior to Japanese, but afterwards finding itself mistaken. The main feature of the announcement—Japan's warlike action to be limited to the China Seas—is full of comfort to all fearful, anxious spirits; it is medicine to be swallowed whole, but it is only "soothing syrup." Japan's ultimatum, indeed, pointed particularly to Kiaochou, as the place possibly to be attacked, but this announcement hinted some possible action in "China Seas."

To be true to some possible facts in the near future, an exception is stated, which may of course become more important than the rule. Japanese action *may* go beyond the China Seas, and *may* enter the Pacific Ocean, but, lest Americans or Australians or the people of India, take a fright, the assurance is given (a) that it will be only "to protect *Japanese* shipping," (b) that it will not go "*westward* of the China Seas" (it may go eastward), and (c) that it will aim only at "territory under German occupation in Eastern Asia." Thus the exception is most wonderfully stretched, so that the rule amounts to little, and may be further stretched so as to hide an exception within the exception.

5. The next tactical move, which every one expected, Japan as well, dates August 23. It is a declaration of war by the Emperor of Japan against Germany.

Germany is busy with warlike preparations at Kiaochou, whilst her armed vessels threaten our and our Ally's commerce. The peace of the Far East thus is jeopardized.

Though the warlike preparations at Tsingtao were for defence only, yet they were warlike preparations. Germany alone did wrong in relying on military strength for the defence of Kiaochou. If Germany had only built a sanatorium and a model town, it could have been peaceably handed over to Japan, without war, and without any trouble to Japan. Germany through proper discipline from Japanese hands is made to learn a lesson, that if she ever does

any more real estate speculation on a large scale, she must rely neither on a navy nor on an army. Also, she should surrender on demand. By her own folly, however, Germany proceeded to fight before surrendering, and thus did just what Japan really wanted her to do. Japan's hidden purpose was thereby facilitated. Germany thus played a low card, for which Japan was ready with her next move.

6. On September 5 Baron Kato, to make plain previous action spoke thus in the Diet:

As we were asked by our ally for assistance at a time when commerce in Eastern Asia, which Japan and Great Britain regard alike as one of their special interests, is subjected to constant menace, Japan, which regards that Alliance as a standing principle of her foreign policy, could not but comply with a request to do her part.

This tactical move adds light to the past, and casts its search-light ahead. Japan is not at all hasty; she loves peace above all else. It is Great Britain who *asks* for help; Japan can not be so hard of heart as to turn a deaf ear to her cry for help! Moreover, Japan and Great Britain have an eye to the commercial side of the vexed question; the commerce of Germany had a chance to be ruined, and that of Great Britain and Japan to be advanced.

7. September 7 the Japanese Diet voted Yen 53,000,000, for war expenses. This amount was just a little more than what Japan got from China in 1895, when she restored Port Arthur and Liaotung to China the first time (Tael 30,000,000). In the present case Japan advances the money, and trusts that Great Britain, or Germany or China will recoup her for her friendly services in the interests of peace and trade.

8. September 8 the Japanese made a successful reconnoissance over Tsingtao. People were lead to believe that Tsingtao alone was to be attacked. No other part of China was aimed at. War was to be circumscribed to the narrowest limits, if so be that it be possible for Japan.

9. If the grand strategy of Japan had only been to take Tsingtao from the Germans, then an attack on Tsingtao alone should have been made. But Japan's strategy looks

to the future; Japan is playing a big game. Her next card is "the king," though perhaps the other side did not know she had it; only England, looking over Japan's shoulder, is aware that this card is to come next.

To the surprise of China, Japanese troops, instead of landing at Tsingtao or its vicinity, land at the port of Lungkou on the northern side of the Shantung promontory; the warships stay there as long as they wish, while the troops choose their own route to the rear of Tsingtao and proceed to build a military railway across country. All this gives Japan a position in a part of Shantung hitherto neglected by German enterprise. By accomplishing this as a "military necessity," Japan makes it clear that she is only fighting German Tsingtao, just as the attack on Tsingtao is to preserve the peace and conserve the Alliance. From the point of view of capturing Tsingtao, these actions are "minor tactics;" from the point of view of her grand strategy not yet disclosed, this is "grand tactics" and nothing less. China began to wake up, and with her awakening, there came the protest, that the game was not played fair.

10. The next tactical move is to make all of Japan's actions legitimate, by China's prompt use of a Manchurian precedent from a previous war, in granting to Japan her wish for a war zone. China's compliance is proof that China is too weak to resist, and, in a diplomatic spirit, that friendship between the two neighbors is not weakened; in fact Japan loves her neighbor, as she loves herself.

11. The next tactical move is more surprising. It is the military occupation of the Weisien railway station, and the steady advance to Tsinanfu, with occupation of adjoining mines worked by Germans. All this is announced as equally legitimate, because it is a "military necessity" to the capturing of Tsingtao, and because property anywhere in Shantung owned or mortgaged by Germans can be better looked after by the Japanese, till the war comes to an end. Japan, moreover, is better able to occupy peaceably both Eastern and Western Shantung.

12. The next great tactical move—apparently the last



card, but really not the last—is to accept, on November 7, the surrender of the Germans, and then turn German Tsingtao into a Japanese town, with names neither German nor Chinese, but Japanese. As the Germans had used up all their ammunition, as the forts were smashed, and as more Germans did not care to allow themselves to be shot, the German surrender was voted “ignominious,” while Japan received compliments from dignitaries at the ends of the earth. The surrender, moreover, does not come too soon for Japan’s benefit. Before the surrender, Japan has secured a new home not only in the ready-made port of Tsingtao, but all over the country from Lungkou to Tsingtao, and from Tsingtao to Tsinanfu, “and in the regions beyond.”

13. When every one supposed that the war in China against the Germans had come to an end, and the last card in the game had been played, lo, another card, this time the “queen,” was brought forth, and the Chinese were given to understand that Japan’s strategy was far from reaching an end. On January 18 the Japanese Minister in Peking presented to the President of the Republic twenty-one demands, all included in the all-comprehensive demand that everything be kept secret, on pain of something worse. Notwithstanding these orders from one sovereignty to another, Oriental secrecy has a faculty of being disclosed. Enough is known, to fill the outsider as well as the Chinese with amazement, for the demands concern not only concessions in mines, railways, and industrial undertakings, but political, administrative and military powers, placing China and all others living in China under the leadership and control of Japan.

This thirteenth move is a long way from the innocent appearance of the first. But this is diplomacy, this is strategy. These various tactical moves show what Japanese strategy is aiming at, nothing less than the domination of China, to the exclusion of the West.